



Companhia Nacional de Canto e Dança - CNCD

Traditional dance in present and future

Intensive residential workshop for dancers and musicians of the northern provinces of Mozambique (Nampula, Cabo Delgado, Niassa)

Taught by a team of dance and music specialists of CNCD & Bettina Holzhausen (Swiss choreographer and dance teacher)

**Ilha de Moçambique
28 November – 18 December 2005**



Supported by the Swiss Development Co-operation in Mozambique

Aims of the project

Capacity building for dance artists in the provinces Nampula, Cabo Delgado and Niassa:

In a three week intensive residential workshop four specialists of CNCD are going to teach together with the Swiss dance artist a dense program of traditional and contemporary dance technique, instrument playing, creative work, teaching, fieldwork and documentation:

- Maintain and further develop the affluence of Mozambican dance culture by providing inspiring and new information for established dance groups in Nampula, Cabo Delgado and Niassa.
- Support the development of traditional culture outside the economic and political center Maputo.
- Encourage dance groups to develop local dance culture with a strong awareness of their own creative potential.
- Inspire future activities of participating dance groups and reach many other groups through them.
- Provide an opportunity to network, exchange thoughts, experience and information between participants.

The future will show if this workshop can be a model for other provinces of Mozambique or if it can become a regular event.

We will continue dancing no matter what happens to us, it will be the last thing to give up.

(Statement of a Parampara-dancer in Nampula, Dec. 2003)

Dance is alive in Mozambique and appears in a huge variety of dances and an impressive number of dance groups. All those dance groups are not just conserving tradition but are inventing and transforming dance in Mozambique day by day. The people of Mozambique have an enormous creative potential doing so and they are proud and self-confident practising dance and music in their communities. The dance culture is important for the well-being of a significant number of people and needs and deserves some more care and attention.

Thousands of people are members of dance groups in Mozambique. Outside the big cities it seems to be one of the most popular leisure activities. Dancing strengthens the identity of communities and links them to other communities and people.

To support and encourage this dance culture means to interact with groups in the provinces, on the edges, in the villages, where new dances are born every year, where the creative power of people is shaping the tradition of the future.

This project focuses especially on the needs of the dancers and musicians in the provinces. It is meant to develop the capacities and skills of the participating groups and should radiate as much as possible into their surroundings.

Lifestyle and culture changes fast these days in Mozambique and traditional techniques and skills risk to disappear. In order to sustain the diversity and liveliness of dance culture it is time to actively pay attention to its evolution. The dance groups need to be encouraged in their dance practices and given tools to further develop dances and music. They have to stay the masters of their knowledge and it has to be in their hands to develop the traditional dance culture of the future.

What and for whom?

Considering the large number of groups and active dancers, this project can only involve a selection of groups. It is important to choose groups, which function as role models in their environment and dispose of more information and know-how than others. 24 representatives of larger and more important groups in the provinces Nampula, Cabo Delgado and Niassa will be selected for the three weeks residential workshop in Ilha de Moçambique.

Key factors to be developed:

- Dance training (traditional and contemporary dance): Practical and theoretical information around dance technique, important training principles (coordination, strength and flexibility).
- Improvisation: Introduction in various concepts and structures for improvisation and its use in creative work.
- Composition / choreography: Encourage the development of creative expression and artistic quality of performances.
- Teaching dance: Basic didactical and methodical skills for teaching.
- Documentation and fieldwork skills: Introduction of documentation and fieldwork skills through theory and practical exercises as the reconstruction and rearrangements of dances.
- Musical skills: Techniques and repertory, instrument making.

The partners

Companhia Nacional de Canto e Dança CNCD is one of the most important cultural institutions in Mozambique. In its 26 years of existence it gathered a lot of know-how and experience around dance in Mozambique. Being the largest professional company in the country means a lot of responsibility as a role model towards all the other dancers and dance groups in the country. Since many years CNCD is initiating and carrying out projects in all parts of Mozambique and tours nationally as well as internationally.

The collaboration of CNCD with the Swiss choreographer and dance teacher Bettina Holzhausen started in 2003. During a residency of four months she taught the dancers of CNCD and created a powerful and original choreography. In December 03 she travelled with a specialists of CNCD to Nampula and Cabo Delgado in order to undertake research about the situation and the needs of dance groups in the provinces. In August 04 she created another choreography for CNCD, a fusion of traditional and contemporary dance – *Mashawona* - based on a traditional dance from Cabo Delgado.

Bettina Holzhausen brings many years of experience as choreographer and dance teacher and also holds an MA in Theatre and Development of the University of Leeds / UK. The past collaborations with CNCD showed that she perfectly adds up the CNCD's know-how expanding traditional knowledge and skills combining them with methods of creative work and modern training principles.

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